

Message Text

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46

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-10 SPC-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 DRC-01

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R 191430Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5630

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT OF SPAIN 1158

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, TD

SUBJECT: ANNUAL PARTY CONVENTION

REFTEL: POS 1134

1. SUMMARY: THE UPCOMING ANNUAL CONVENTION OF T&T'S RULING PARTY WILL TAKE PLACE AGAINST A BACKGROUND OF CONSIDERABLE FERMENT BOTH WITHIN ITS RANKS AND IN THE COUNTRY AT LARGE. THE CONVENTION SHOULD SET THE TONE FOR THE ELECTIONS AND CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES EXPECTED IN THE COMING YEAR AND DEMONSTRATE THE DEGREE TO WHICH PRIME MINISTER WILLIAMS CAN DOMINATE THE PARTY. IT MAY ALSO GIVE A CLUE TO HIS PLANS FOR HIS SUCCESSION. END SUMMARY.

2. THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL RULING PEOPLE'S NATIONAL MOVEMENT (PNM) CONVENTION SEPTEMBER 28-30 WILL BE EAGERLY WATCHED FOR INDICATIONS OF THE GOTT'S REACTIONS TO THE COUNTRY'S INTERNAL WOES (POS 1122) AND PLANS FOR THE CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION AND NATIONAL ELECTIONS GENERALLY EXPECTED IN EARY 1974. ALTHOUGH LAST YEAR'S CONVENTION WAS DOMINATED BY WILLIAMS' BLASTS AT "FOREIGN INTERFERENCE", HE CAN HARDLY AVOID DEALING MORE DIRECTLY WITH HIS OWN PROBLEMS THIS YEAR.

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3. BOTH THE PARTY'S POLITICAL LEADER (WILLIAMS) AND PARTY CHAIRMAN (PREVATT) ARE UP FOR REELECTION FOR 5-YEAR TERMS, ALTHOUGH WILLIAMS SO FAR HAS NOT COMMITTED HIMSELF PROBABLY IN AN ATTEMPT TO PROVOKE HIS BEING DRAFTED BY ACCLAMATION. KARL HUDSON-PHILLIPS' ABORTIVE EFFORT TO OPEN UP THE CONVENTION THROUGH A CONTESTED ELECTION FOR PARTY CHAIRMAN GAINED A GOOD DEAL OF SUPPORT WITHIN THE PARTY AMONG THOSE WHO SEE PNM POWER AND INFLUENCE DIMINIHSED BY ITS FOSSILIZATION. WILLIAMS' REJECTION OF HUDSON-PHILLIPS' BID INDICATES THAT HE INTENDS TO CONTINUE HIS IRON DISCIPLINE IN THE PARTY. HOWEVER, THERE IS A CHANCE THAT THE DISCONTENT OF A SIZEABLE PORTION OF THE PARTY WITH THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING MAY SURFACE AT THE CONVENTION.

4. PERHAPS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT OUTCOME OF THE CONVENTION MAY BE CLUES AS TO WHAT PLANS WILLIAMS MAY HAVE FOR HIS EVENTUAL SUCCESSION, FOR THE TRANSFER OF POWER TO A NEW POLITICAL GENERATION CANNOT BE POSTPONED INDEFINITELY. DESPITE CONSIDERABLE EVIDENCE THAT HE IS FED UP AND WANTS OUT, HE IS TOO CONCERNED WITH HIS PLACE IN HISTORY TO LEAVE NOW UNDER FIRE AND BEFORE CONSITUTION REVISION AND HIS VINDICATION IN CONTESTED ELECTIONS (THE OPPOSITION BOYCOTTED THE 1971 CONTEST). AFTER YEARS OF CUTTING POTENTIAL OPPOSITION OFF AT THE KNEES, WILLIAMS FINDS HIMSELF WITHOUT HEIR APPARENT, SCANT TALENT TO PLAY WITH, AND THE BEGINNINGS OF RESTLESSNESS IN THE PNM RANKS. ALL IN ALL, IT SHOULD MAKE FOR A LIVELY CONVENTION.

MARSHALL

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